

Austin Transit Community Coalition

May 11, 2005

Dear Mayor Wynn, Mayor Pro Tem Goodman and Members of the City Council

We ask that you support the following important changes to the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Ordinance:

- (1) Retain deeper income targeting (percentages by income group)**
- (2) Protect gentrifying neighborhoods**

These recommended changes are supported by a broad range of individuals and organizations that have endorsed the attached ***Community Values Statement on Transit Oriented Development***. The recommendations derived from discussions at community meetings held in January and attended by a diverse group of citizens concerned about affordable housing, neighborhoods, small businesses, the environment, and transportation—in essence, the character of our community.

The group has agreed to a basic community value: that Austinites of all different income levels will have the opportunity to live in safe, decent, and affordable housing in our city.

The attached ordinance amendments would provide that a baseline of affordability be guaranteed in each transit district—that workers of all different income levels, and not just affluent workers, will have the opportunity to live and work near the City's commuter rail lines. Without this change, a large number of people, including almost 50% of city employees, will likely not be able to live in the TODs.

Austin's new transit communities are an excellent opportunity to achieve important community values—to attain mixed-income; mixed-age communities that have a unique sense of place and that integrate with the surrounding communities. However, these goals will be realized only if the ordinance is designed appropriately.

We respectfully request that you amend the Transit Oriented Development Ordinance and Resolution to incorporate the attached language.

**Austin Transit Communities Coalition
Amendments for TOD Ordinance and Resolution
May 11,2005**

Amendment #1: Retain Deeper Income Targeting (percentages by Income)

Current language:

The current language in the ordinance concerning affordability is as follows:

25-2-766.22

A station area plan:

(7) shall include a housing affordability analysis and feasibility review that describes potential strategies for achieving a goal of 25 percent of new housing to serve low and moderate income families, including home ownership opportunities for families at or below 80 percent of median family income and rental housing opportunities for families at or below 60 percent of median family income;

Austin Transit Communities Coalition Amendment language:

Add the following language to the ordinance at the end of the above subsection 25-2-766.22(7):

This analysis will include a feasibility review of the pursuit of additional affordability goals in the TODs such that Austin households of all different income levels will have the opportunity to live within Austin's TOD districts.

For homeownership units, these goals include 10 percent of units for families at 70 to 80 percent of Median Family Income, 10 percent of units for families at 60 to 70 percent of MFI, and 5 percent of units at less than 60 percent of MFI.

For rental units, these goals include 10 percent of units at 40 to 60 percent of Median Family Income, 10 percent of units at 30 to 40 percent of MFI, and 5 percent of units at less than 30 percent of MFI.

Explanation: This amendment language adds the deeper income targeting (percentages by income) goals that are currently in the resolution to the TOD ordinance. This change is important because the ordinance lays out the requirement that a feasibility review be conducted of the affordability goals within each TOD.

If a goal is to ensure that the housing within each TODs is affordable to working families at all income levels, then in order to be effective, the feasibility review required by the ordinance also needs to examine strategies for serving the thousands of working Austin families at 30%, 40%, and 50% of the median family income.

Amendment #2: Protect Gentrifying Neighborhoods

Current language:

Section (B) of the Resolution currently reads:

The housing goals of each Station Area Plan may be modified during the Station Area Planning Process to establish affordability percentages and MFI levels appropriate to each Station Area.

Austin Transit Communities Coalition Amendment language:

Strike the above language in Section (B) of the Resolution and substitute the following:

The housing goals for each station area plan should be modified during the station area planning process as appropriate to:

1. Reflect the incomes of the surrounding residents and allow surrounding residents to be able to afford housing in the Station Area; and
2. Ensure that families at lower income levels will have the opportunity to live in all TODs.

Explanation:

The wording of the resolution could allow the housing goals in the ordinance to be diluted in higher income TODs simply because the incomes of the surrounding residents are higher. The resolution needs to be clarified that the housing goals cannot be weakened, only strengthened to achieve even greater affordability.

The goals should be modified to serve families at even lower income levels in gentrifying neighborhoods to ensure that the surrounding residents are able to afford housing within the TODs. The goals should not be diluted in higher income TODs. Families at lower income levels should have the opportunity to live in all TODs, not just TODs in East Austin.

Fruitvale Transit Village: Oakland, CA

The Fruitvale Transit Village is a mixed-use transit-oriented development on approximately 15 acres. The development is centered around a pedestrian plaza which connects all the facilities directly to the BART rail station. The development has 220 units of mixed-income housing.



Fruitvale Transit Village

Highlights: Fruitvale Transit Village

- Affordable housing serves families at 35-80% median family income
- Child development facility
- New library
- Community-based medical clinic
- Multipurpose senior center
- Attended bicycle parking facility
- Retail and office lease space

Mission Bay: San Francisco, CA

When completed, this multiphase mixed-use transit-oriented development project will include **6,000 housing units**, with **1,700 (28%)** affordable to moderate, low, and very low-income households.



Rich Sorro Commons

Example of an Affordable Housing Development in Mission Bay: Rich Sorro Commons Apartments

- ♦ 100 units of affordable housing for families
- ♦ 3,200 square foot childcare center
- ♦ After-school mentoring and enrichment program
- ♦ 7,000 square feet of commercial and retail space
- ♦ Ten units are reserved for people living with AIDS and three units are designed for residents operating small childcare operations.

Pearl District: Portland, Oregon

The Pearl District transit-oriented development includes 5,000 new housing units in 43 different development projects. Housing is available for families with a broad range of incomes, including families earning 30%, 50%, and 60% of the median family income.



Lovejoy Station

Example of Affordable Housing Development in the Pearl District: Lovejoy Station

- 199 residential units
- Units reserved for households with incomes between 40% and 80% median family income
- Within 2 blocks of city parks
- Located directly on the transit line

Community Value Statement on Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs)

Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs) will influence the shape of growth within and around Austin for many years. They are an opportunity to achieve the important community goals of affordable housing, mixed-income communities, improved transportation options, an increased tax base, and desirable places that build on the fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods. To achieve these community goals:

At least 25% of the housing in each TOD will be affordable; the housing will serve renters and homeowners of a broad range of income levels, including those with disabilities.

Affordability will be preserved for existing residents and businesses in the vicinity of each TOD.

TODs will adhere to the neighborhood planning process—they will not override existing neighborhood plans.

TODs will incorporate good, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented design and high-level green-building techniques

TODs will create a distinct sense of place that reflects the unique characteristics of the surrounding community.

TODs will be a place for all age groups and people of all abilities, with public green-space, children's play spaces and neighborhood services.

There will be a clearly defined public process with meaningful public input throughout TOD planning and development.

Because TODs represent a significant public investment, TODs must provide financial returns to the community.

List of Supporters
Community Values Statement on Transit-Oriented Development

Organizational Supporters

Austin Community Development Corporation
 Austin Tenants Council
 Chestnut Revitalization Corporation
 Foundation Communities
 Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation
 Gray Panthers
 Liveable City
 Rosewood Neighborhood Planning Team
 Texas Low Income Housing Information Service
 Trans Texas Alliance

Individual Supporters

Alison Agullera	Jill McRae
Sarah Andre	Joann Meadows
Karl Banta	Susan Moffat
Christine Barwick	Dr. Steven A. Moore
Valinda Bolton	Liz Mueller
Don and Sharon Brown	Jason Neulander, Salvage Vanguard Theatre
Becca Bruce	Michael Oden
Marla Camacho	Lydia Ortiz
Jennifer Daughtrey	Hector Ortiz
James Davis	Camille Pawha
Brian Donovan	Karen Paup
Marianne Dwight	Robin Rather
Cathy Echols	Cynthia Riley
Frank Fernandez	Ruby Roa
David Foster	Bruce Rodenborn
Pamela Shaw Gipson	State Rep. Eddie Rodriguez
Patty Gonzales	Mark Rogers
Tom Hatch	Brigid Shea
Isabelle Headrick	Niyanta Spelman
JD Holt	Bill Spelman
Gerard Kinney	Clint Smith
Ann Kitchen	Lisa Tipps
Salvador Lara	Kathy Tyler
Mercy Lara	Preston Tyree
Dianna Lewis	Jim Walker
Rebecca Lightsey	Heather K. Way
Lisa Martinez	Mitch Weynand
Santos & Dolores Martinez	Barbara Wiederaenders
Bo McCarver	Gavin Wilson
Dusty McCormick	Bruce Wlenzak
Yuhayna McCoy	Mark Yznaga